

March 30, 2012

ConnectME Authority

Phillip Lindley, Executive Director

Statehouse Station 78

Augusta, ME 04333-0078

Re: Round Seven Pre-Application Letter – Complete build out of the South West Quarter of Alna

Dear Members of the Connect Maine Authority,

The Town of Alna is formally requesting a ConnectME grant to help fund a project that would supply broadband internet service to almost 25% of the homes in Alna. This project would bring our town into *almost full broadband coverage. Alna is a small town of roughly 350 households and less than 700 citizens. It, like other rural Maine towns, is served by a patchwork of telecommunication companies and technologies. The area to be addressed in this project is experiencing truly a “last-mile” scenario and we believe is a perfect fit for this program.

**(there are two houses in the North West of town on the end of the Bailey Rd. that are not served by any broadband, however to service these households would be cost prohibitive. Although these houses are not included in the grant request, we would like to reserve the right to re-apply for these houses in a future round should the situation change.)*

The following information is provided in compliance of the guidelines set forth by the ConnectME Seventh Grant Round Pre-Application Letter solicitation dated March 6, 2012. Should there be a need for more information or clarification, please contact Jonathan Villeneuve, Second Selectman at 207-882-4614.

1. A description of the area proposed to be served by the project with a strong indication that it is an unserved area;

The project would involve 6.67 miles passing 77 homes. These homes are located on the West Alna Road, Cross Road and Lothrop Road. Most residents in this area have been left behind with either dial up modem service or no internet service. A few residents are getting by with Satellite internet, however this is very costly (both upfront and monthly) and the service is not optimal. A few are lucky enough to have adequate cellular phone coverage such that a “MyFi” service or tethering is viable, but not optimal. We are confident that this area is would strongly qualify as unserved.

2. A description of the communications with nearby incumbent or existing broadband service providers for current and future plans for expansion in the proposed project area;

The homes in the unserved area have telephone service through Fairpoint which does not offer DSL service to this area. Many of the residents have requested DSL directly from Fairpoint and have been told there are no plans to expand DSL to their area. Based on this and other unofficial communication we believe that Fairpoint DSL will not be an option for this area for years to come.

The northern border of the unserved area is served by Tidewater Telecom DSL. Because of the Fairpoint territory lines, Tidewater is unable to expand DSL into the unserved area. However they did, at the request of the town, survey this area as part of a town wide Fiber Optic installation. The quotation was received in 2011, but was too costly to consider for the town and a ConnectME grant.

The southern and eastern border of the unserved area is served by Time Warner Cable Broadband. The Town of Alna contacted TWC last summer to survey the unserved area. TWC returned a proposal that we believe is a great fit for the unserved area, the Town and the ConnectME Authority grant program.

3. Description of the proposed project

The technology will consist of a hybrid fiber coax infrastructure; consistent with TWC's cable plant throughout the State. The build includes fiber connection from existing fiber termination to a distribution node location. Distribution includes coax hard-line along pole lines to distribution tap locations. Distribution tap location is the take off point to the home from the roadway. Rg-6, Rg-7, Rg-11 coax drop cable will be used to connect the home to the distribution tap.

TWC will apply for all applicable pole permits and applications no later than thirty (30) days from the day notice is received regarding grant award and will complete the project within six (6) months of receipt of required approvals and completion of make-ready. It is anticipated that make-ready by pole owners will take approximately six (6) months. Broadband services and speeds that will be available are listed below:

Road Runner Lite - Download 765 kbps/ Upload 128KBPS

Road Runner Basic - 1.5Mb Download, 256kbps Upload

Road Runner Standard - 10Mb Download/ 1Mb Upload

Road Runner Turbo - 15Mb Download/ 1Mb Upload

4. The total amount of funding requested from the Authority

Total amount of the project is \$155,293 – TWC will contribute \$500 per passing for a total of \$38,500 – leaving a balance of \$116,793.

5. The applicant's financial capability and commitment to the project in addition to the funding requested from the Authority and other funding sources

The Town of Alna is committed to the execution of this project. Although the Selectmen have no authority to raise and commit funds for this without the Town Meeting approval, we will author a warrant article as such should the need arise for addition funding above the granted amount. The town has successfully raised matching funds in the past required by various grants. (e.g. Fire Department equipment)

6. The percentage of households in the unserved area that will have access to the new service and the estimated number of customers who will benefit from the project who are currently unserved;

With the expansion of service to the 77 households along the 6.67 miles of road on Cross Road, West Alna Road and Lothrop Road, 100% of all homes will have the ability to purchase services including broadband from TWC. These services would include but not be limited to television, broadband, and telephone service.

7. Public-private partnerships that have been established and an indication of community support for the proposed project.

Over the past several years community interest and support for establishing reliable broadband service to this area has been extremely high. A broadband committee was formed and members researched options. Various hearings and positive discussions at Selectmen's and Town Meetings have occurred. We have every indication that the community supports this project.

Over the years the Town of Alna has worked collaboratively with many non-governmental and private organizations to accomplish much. Among these are the Alna Volunteer Fire Department, Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association, WW&F Railway Museum, Friend of the Headtide Church.

8. A description of the applicant's experience relevant to the proposed project.

In 2011, we received the town wide Fiber optic proposal from Tidewater Telecom. After precluding the Fiber Optic project on the high cost and the fact that 75% of the town already had broadband, we decided to focus more closely on just the unserved area. We surveyed the townspeople and drove around to verify the unserved areas. We then relayed that information onto TWC, inviting them for a proposal.

We will work in collaboration with TWC for this project. TWC has extensive experience in the design, installation, and maintenance of broadband infrastructure. TWC is a national company with some 1,000 local employees who will ensure that the needed infrastructure meets the needs of all stakeholders involved.

In closing we would like to thank the ConnectME Authority for this opportunity to help provide this area of Alna with broadband infrastructure it needs to be brought along with the rest of Maine and not be left behind.

Warm Regards,

Jonathan Villeneuve

Second Selectman: On behalf of the Selectmen of Alna